





gift from him. Kothari refuses to receive the necklace, and, with a wistful look, says:

SP: "I ASK IT AS A GREAT FAVOR, MISS VANBRUGH. IT IS MY PARTING GIFT, AND I HOPE YOU WILL LIVE LONG TO WEAR IT."

She looks at Winslow, and Kothari urging the latter to use his influence to make her accept the necklace, she finally consents. Kothari takes her hand and wishes her happiness, shakes hands with Winslow, and walks from the room, closing the door softly behind him. For a moment Helen and Winslow look at each other, she delighted and holding the necklace to her throat, he glad to see her pleased. She asks him to clasp it about her neck, and he does so, kissing her fondly. (Fade out.)

44. DINING ROOM AT MRS. VANBRUGH'S. (Long shot.) Fire burning in the grate at the extreme end of the big room. Dinner is being served. There are twenty guests present, and all is happiness and good fellowship. (Fade out.)
45. VANDORP AND HALE IN SPEEDING AUTOMOBILE. (Fade out.)
46. EXTERIOR OF A HOUSE IN NEW YORK, WHERE WINSLOW HAS HIS STUDIO. Vandorp and Hale drive up, jump from the automobile, run up the steps, and ring the bell violently. The door is opened by an elderly woman, and they breathlessly inquire for Winslow. She tells them he has gone out, but does not know where, and they hurry down the steps and drive off. (Fade out.)
47. DINING ROOM AT MRS. VANBRUGH'S. (Long shot.) (Fade in.) The dinner is nearing its end, and the dessert is being served. One of the men rises and taps his wine-glass. He proposes the toast of the engaged couple.
48. VANDORP AND HALE IN AUTOMOBILE, SPEEDING THROUGH NEW YORK STREETS.
49. DINING ROOM AT MRS. VANBRUGH'S. They are drinking the health of the young couple. They are standing, with glasses raised to Helen and Winslow.
50. EXTERIOR OF MRS. VANBRUGH'S HOUSE. Vandorp and Hale dash up, fling themselves from the automobile before it has come to a stop, run up the steps, and ring the bell furiously. A servant opens the door, and



for a moment hesitates, startled by their excited appearance. They brush the servant aside and enter.

51. DINING ROOM. The guests are just putting down their glasses when the door is flung open and Vandorp and Hale burst into the room. For a moment all is confusion, all eyes are turned upon them. Vandorp springs forward and snatches the necklace from Helen's throat. Before Hale can stop him, Vandorp, his only thought to get rid of the necklace, throws it into the fire at the far end of the room. Realizing what he has done, Vandorp springs back; the next moment there is an explosion which wrecks the grate, mantelpiece, and far end of the room. Those present stare at Vandorp and Hale, unable to comprehend. Helen, realizing the ghastly peril she has miraculously escaped, staggers and all but faints. Vandorp turns to Winslow and tells him to take her away, and Winslow, supporting her on his arm, leads her from the room.
52. CONSERVATORY OF MRS. VANBRUGH'S HOUSE, WITH FRENCH WINDOWS LEADING TO GARDEN. Helen and Winslow enter, and for a second or two stand in the centre of the room. He calms her, and she recovers her composure. Together, they walk over to the French window. He opens it, and they look out into the night. Then, with a whispered word he draws her to him in an access of tenderness. They step out into the moonlit garden. (Iris down.)

THE END.





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# THE HARVARD COURSE

IN

## PHOTOPLAY WRITING



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IN

PHOTOPLAY WRITING ✓



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no 2

In all history there has been nothing more romantic and spectacular than the rise of the Silent Drama. The demand for this form of entertainment has grown, and continues to grow, so rapidly that new producing companies are formed almost each week. The supply of available material has diminished in proportion to the increased demand, until to-day the Motion Picture Industry is literally bankrupt for stories. Hence, the prices paid for the filmrights to books and stage-plays are mounting to truly extravagant figures. The Genius of the Screen, D.W. Griffith., paid \$175,000.00 for the right to screen "WAY DOWN EAST," while "BEN HUR" is held at the astounding figure of \$500,000.00, with the holders of the rights by no means eager to sell.

The essential requirements for writing acceptable Photoplays are imagination and a working knowledge of not only the correct method of presenting your ideas, but also of the demands and technical limitations of the modern Studio. It is becoming more widely understood each day that writing Photoplays is not a natural gift, but a profession, a trade, just like bookkeeping, tailoring or furniture-making. This most lucrative of all professions



demands neither genius nor literary skill; but you must learn to present ideas, just as you must learn to keep books or make clothes. The producers pay you for your work, and pay you well; and in return they demand that you write your plays, not the way you want to write them, but the way they want them written. In brief, they demand, and have a right to demand, that before submitting your work you study the underlying principles of the photoplay and follow the rules of the game.

## CLASSIFICATION OF ACTORS.

Actors are classified according as they customarily assume the part of one type or another. The members of a company are selected with reference to them. Most important of all, from the present point of view, plays are usually bought by the Producer to fit a certain star, and this fact should be kept in mind when writing plays.

## THE STAR.

An actor or actress of unusual talent or reputation, who plays the leading part in a play, is called a Star. When writing Star Plays, the part of the Star must be emphasized; the Star must be given the lion's share of the strong scenes, kept upon the screen the greater portion of the play, and made the centre of attraction during the entire performance. The lines and incidents of





the plot must be so arranged as to give the Star every possible opportunity of displaying his or her gifts.

## DOUBLE STARS.

These are rapidly coming to the front, many plays being constructed so as to give two stars equal shares in the honors of the performance.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES A PHOTO-PLAY.

In the broadest sense, a photo-play is a complete and unified story of human life acted out upon the screen in a series of incidents or scenes so arranged as to excite the greatest amount of interest and pleasure in the audience by means of

Novelty,  
Variety,  
Contrast,  
Suspense,  
Surprise,  
Climax,  
Humor,  
Pathos,

Above all, your story must please and interest your audience. You may discuss a social problem, you may point a moral if you wish, but you must do it in such a way that you compel the attention and interest of your audience from the first scene to the last.

Your story should be original if possible; but even an old story, presented in a novel way, possesses all the charm of novelty. Thus, even a very simple story



may be made into a first-class play; and indeed, one of the most successful plays ever screened had nothing more than this for a plot: Bill wants to Marry Grace, but cannot do so because Fred has told her that Bill is in love with Myrtle. Grace, therefore, spurns Bill's tender advances. Presently Bill discovers Fred's treachery and marries Grace. A simple enough idea, surely; but it was the complications, the incidents, the obstacles, that put this play "across."

Every story that has any value for photoplay purposes may be reduced, roughly, to this formula:

A (meaning one or more characters) is trying to gain some end, to achieve some purpose. In this endeavor he is opposed by B (meaning one or more characters,) who tries to prevent A from carrying out his purpose. After a series of incidents, in which first one and then the other seems to have the upper hand, A finally succeeds in frustrating the designs of B.

In other words, someone must kill, or steal, or deceive, or love, or marry, or there can be no play.

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## WHAT TO WRITE --- AND WHAT TO AVOID.

Unless the story is one that can be acted out on the screen by men and women, it is worthless for photoplay purposes. It is not enough that it can be told; it must be acted. It must be capable of expression by those movements of the human body which tell of passion, emotion, resolve. It must be a story capable of being told in pantomime; in dagger-thrusts, kisses, frowns, laughter, caresses, eating, fighting and dying. If it satisfies these requirements, it is a photoplay story; if it does not, all the fine language ever used will not save it from the Scenario Editor's waste-basket; it may make a good novel or a good poem, but it will never make a successful photoplay.

Even if it possess all the qualifications, however, your story may still fail as a play. Many beginners with really good, salable ideas fail through ignorance of the conventionalities and the technical limitations which enter into the production of film dramas. There are definite cast-iron rules which must be adhered to:-





1. Those arising from the conditions under which motion pictures are produced.
2. Traditions developed at various times during the history of the photoplay.
3. The rules set up by the Board of Censors.

In writing your play, do not lose sight of the fact that production, these days, is expensive, and that the item of cost plays an important role when your manuscript is under consideration by the Scenario Editors. By all means provide for settings within reason, but do not stipulate for an earthquake to kill your villain when there are so many ways of accomplishing this laudable purpose with infinitely less expense. Do not demand your hero shall land on the observation platform of a rushing express train from a soaring aeroplane; this kind of story is invariably written by an expressly commissioned playwright, who, moreover, has an expressly prepared outline to work from, and an exact knowledge of the kind of stunts the particular star for whom it is intended can do. Until you have "arrived" and are familiar with the facilities of the command of the studio that is to produce your play, make your plays as normal and simple as you can.

It is possible nowadays, by employing sunlight aros, spotlights, and similar contrivances, to take night scenes. These aros cost several thousand dollars



each, however, and on account of their size and weight are difficult to transport from place to place. Hence, it is best to have your characters form the habit of staying at home nights whenever possible.

Further, a story of the late lamented war, in which a windmill is hit by a shell and a spy who has been hiding there is thrown headlong through the drawing-room window of an old castle into the arms of the General commanding the opposing forces, may be very delightful reading, but it won't be easy to film it; and then, too, your spy may have a wife and family to support.

Generally speaking, there is nothing that cannot be produced, and if your story must have such a scene, put it in, regardless of cost; but do not do so unless absolutely necessary. Remember always these two things: First, that the average producer is not particularly anxious to spend any more money than he has to in the production of a play; and second, that, although a good many of the "thrills" are faked, many are not, as the fact that to date approximately 39,000 motion picture actors have met with more or less serious accidents abundantly testifies.

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## CENSORSHIP RULES.

The censorship rules, generally speaking, are not very stringent, the principal requirement being that the play shall not be offensive to good taste. The Board of Censors will bar a play for any of the following reasons:

1. Because it contains scenes of moral depravity.
2. Because immorality or crime triumphs over virtue.
3. Because it shows the actual method of committing a crime.
4. Because it is unpatriotic.
5. Because it encourages anarchy or revolution.
6. Because it libels a place, religion, industry or person.

Further, the largest producers have recently agreed among themselves to "purify" the "movies" still further, and have set up a list of "fourteen points," which will be observed in future when considering plays submitted to them for production. It is hoped by this to scotch the movement which lately has gained ground for the institution of a State Censorship over







# THE HARVARD COURSE IN PHOToplay WRITING

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the movies. Following are the private rules mentioned:

1. No pictures showing sex attraction in an improper or suggestive manner.
2. No pictures dealing with "white slavery," dope, or illicit alcohol.
3. Stories built up on illicit love permissible only if they convey a moral lesson.
4. Nakedness not permissible.
5. Inciting or suggestive dances not permissible.
6. No unnecessarily long passionate love scenes.
7. No stories principally concerned with the underworld.
8. No pictures making drunkenness or gambling attractive.
9. No pictures which might instruct the morally weak in crime methods.
10. No stories which might offend any religious sect.
11. No incidents showing disrespect for any religion.
12. Suggestive comedy barred.
13. Unnecessary depiction of robbery or bloodshed must be avoided.
14. No salacious or suggestive titles.



## CLASSIFICATION OF PLAYS.

### THE THEME.

By the "Theme" of a play is meant the problem which the play presents for the consideration of the audience.

It should not be inferred that the playwright must select a theme at the outset and build his play upon it. He may have a theme, or he may set to work unconsciously and find with astonishment, when his work is over, that a theme has grown up unbidden.

#### 1.) THE DRAMA.

The general characteristic of this type of play is the predominance of the emotional element, a tendency to sentimentality, and a rapid movement of incident. It calls for powerful situations displaying intense passion and emotion. Intrigue and crime furnish the necessary complications.

The theme should be some topic of the day. Love is the standing theme of this class of play.



## 2.) THE COMEDY.

In a comedy there is conflict, which is always reconciled in the end, and all disasters averted. The conflict itself, however serious it may have seemed all through the play, turns out to have been a case of much ado about nothing. The characters are either not serious in their aims and purposes, or, if they are, the objects for which they have been striving are shown to be worthless. In comedy some one is usually represented as pursuing a bubble. At the close of the play, the bubble bursts. The theme in comedy is of less consequence than in drama, and in the lighter forms of comedy usually is not present at all.

## 3. THE SLAPSTICK COMEDY (FARCE.)

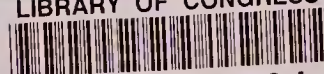
These should not be attempted, as there is practically no market for them. Slapstick comedies are usually filmed in a series of disjointed incidents, each taken for its comic possibilities alone, and joined afterward. The producers usually "invent" this type of play as they go along, suiting the scenes to a particular star whom they are exploiting.







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